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tionalized flower beds. On one side a row of cypress trees shades another brook, with its meander pattern simulating waves, while the outer edge is bordered on two sides with the reciprocal lily motive. Carpets of this type were woven for the winter palaces, a lingering memory of the glories of summer.

Taken as a whole, the rugs here shown are representative of the greatest epochs in the art of carpet weaving and, combined with those in the Altman Collection and the Persian examples in the Fletcher bequest, comprise an exhibit of which the Museum may well be proud.

F. M.

A BRONZE RELIEF OF MEDUSA

THE development of the Medusa type is a striking illustration of the growing sense for beauty in the Greek consciousness. The Medusa is not a creation of the Greek mind, but is part of the vast inheritance which came to Greece from the Orient. With sundry other monster shapes she makes her appearance in Greek art about the seventh century B. C., not merely as a creature evolved by a fantastic imagination but rather as a deep-rooted religious conception. For evidence is accumulating that the Medusa is the direct descendant of the great nature divinities of the pre-Hellenic world—of the Minoan Snake Goddess, of the Egyptian Bes, of the Persian Artemis, and of other kindred earth spirits.¹

Medusa's long past necessitated certain features in her representation. The archaic Greek artist conceived her as a grotesque, often winged creature, with snakes in her hair, staring eyes, and protruding tongue.² But with the advance of religious and artistic conceptions the inherent Greek dislike for abnormalities as-

serted itself. In the fifth century B. C. the Oriental monster shapes either disappeared or became transformed so as to satisfy the prevalent ideal of beauty.

An excellent example of this later conception of Medusa is a bronze relief recently acquired by the Museum (fig. 1). Here all the ugly features of former days have disappeared, and a noble, beautiful type has been substituted. The characteristic features, however, have been retained, and their effect is the stronger since a subtler treatment has replaced the



FIG. 1. ORNAMENT FROM CHARIOT POLE
FRONT VIEW

former childish exaggeration. Instead of the distorted face with goggle eyes and protruding tongue, the countenance is rigidly calm; but the wide-open eyes have a fixed glare which we can better believe capable of turning men into stone, as the legend ran, than the harmless grin of earlier days—especially when the eyes shone, as they did originally, in bright silver with pupils probably of precious stones. The place of the radiating snakes is taken by the wavy locks flying loose about the head and forming a beautiful variegated framework for the face. Among the locks a pair of snakes is skilfully introduced with ends intertwined below Medusa's chin. Two small wings rising from the head are likewise rendered less conspicuous by the surrounding hair.

Our relief is beautifully worked in the refined though rather hard style of the

¹See on this subject the interesting article by A. L. Frothingham in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, XV (1911), pp. 349 ff.

²Many representations in our Museum illustrate this type; see the examples in the Third Room of the Classical Wing: on the Etruscan chariot in Case M, on the kylix G. R. 521 in Case A, on the kylix 14.136 in Case K, and the terracotta reliefs 10.210.44 and 10.210.46 in Case J.

Graeco-Roman period of the first century. The type, however, is clearly derived from a Greek creation of the fifth or fourth century B. C. There are many variants of this type, the best known being the marble Medusa Rondanini in the Glyptothek in Munich. A later development was the introduction of a note of pathos in Medusa's expression, corresponding to the more personal, introspective thought of Hellenistic times (see e. g. the cameo in Case A, Seventh Room).

The Medusa relief decorates a cylindrical object 6 inches in diameter, $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches in height (fig. 2); the other side of the cylinder is provided on its sides with two elongated rings and two hooks, firmly riveted, and is decorated along its edges with ornamental bands inlaid with silver and copper.¹ The purpose of this object seems to have been to decorate the end of a wooden chariot pole, the side rings serving to connect the yokes or collars of the horses with the pole (their shape is very appropriate for this use), the hooks at top and bottom probably for further fastening either to the harness or to the upper part of the chariot. The Medusa relief is

obviously designed to be seen from just such a position as it would occupy if the object were used for this purpose.

Ornamented ends of chariot poles can frequently be seen on representations of ancient chariots in both Greek and Roman monuments. Birds' and rams' heads are specially popular. The poles are often provided with rings, and on several we see the pole-end connected by a strap with the rim of the chariot body.¹ Among the actual examples of ancient pole-ends which have been found, one almost identical with ours, but somewhat smaller, is published in Caylus, *Recueil d'antiquités*, pl. LXI, i-iii; compare also pl. LXXXIX, i-ii. Another is in private possession in New York. The considerable weight of our specimen (4 lbs. 13 oz.) shows that it must have belonged to a rather large car, unless its very weight was considered desirable to prevent the backward tipping of the body of the chariot in case of accident. With such a fine pole-end we can imagine that the chariot itself must have been a very handsome vehicle.

G. M. A. R.

¹Compare the similar inlaid decorations on the Roman table, No. 1211, and on the base of the panther statuette, No. 403, both in the Ninth Room of our Classical Wing.

¹Compare on all these points the illustrations of ancient chariots in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités*, under *currus*, and especially the references given on p. 1638, note 76.



FIG. 2. ORNAMENT FROM CHARIOT POLE
PROFILE VIEW